

Great Welcomes



 Great Southern Hotels



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A DOUBLE WELCOME

In Great Southern Hotels we pride ourselves on the warmth of the welcome we give to our guests. Now we have a new token of that welcome, this magazine, produced exclusively for your enjoyment as a valued guest of Great Southern Hotels.

In these pages you'll find plenty of interest about Ireland, and in particular about the regions where our seven hotels are located. We've also taken the opportunity to introduce you to some of the people in the hotels who make our Company the unique entity that it is — the people who are here to serve you, and to make every aspect of your stay pleasant and enjoyable.

Ireland is of course full of history — so we've not been shy about including something about our own story. Great Southern is the longest established hotel group in Ireland, with a tradition of innkeeping that goes back for nearly a century and a half. For all that time, we've been dedicated to providing our guests with the highest quality — and that remains our aim as we approach the 21st century.

For us, history is a living thing — we are proud of our tradition, but equally proud that every day we have the opportunity to add to that tradition and to bring it forward by serving you better. Enjoy your stay with us! We look forward to seeing you back again.

Eamonn McKeon

EAMONN MCKEON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
GREAT SOUTHERN HOTELS

CONTENTS

HISTORY IN THE MAKING.

Hugh Oram traces the history of the Great Southern Hotel Group — the oldest hotel group in Ireland — from its inception in 1845 to the present day **4**

GALWAY: A STATE OF MIND.

Michael D. Higgins, poet and mayor of Galway reflects on Co. Galway, one of the most beautiful counties in Ireland which has seen many changes over the years, but which has retained its character intact. **6**

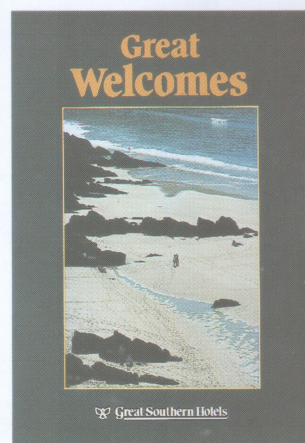
GREAT SOUTHERN NEWS — What's happening in the Great Southern Hotels **10**

Galway: A State of Mind



JOSEPHINE MAKES HER MARK! Ireland's only lady chef to head the kitchen brigade in a Grade A* hotel, Josephine Lean, has been instrumental in maintaining Parknasilla's reputation for culinary excellence **12**

DOING THE BUSINESS. The Great Southern Hotel in Killarney has become the pre-eminent conference centre in the country. Jim Nolan, Director, I.A.P.I. talks about their successful annual conference recently held in Killarney. **14**



Cover photograph by Bill Doyle

FLOWERS FOR ALL SEASONS. Verney Naylor, who has a wonderful garden at home, takes a trip around the beautiful and interesting gardens open to the public near the Great Southern Hotels **16**

FISHING IN DEEP WATERS. Celebrated photographer and author Mike Bunn extolls the virtues of the fishing in lakes and seas around Ireland. **18**

ON THE HERITAGE TRAIL. The South East of Ireland plays host to many tokens of Ireland's ancient heritage. Nicky Furlong looks at the history of the region and visits the National Heritage Park at Ferrycarrig. **22**

Fishing in Deep Waters



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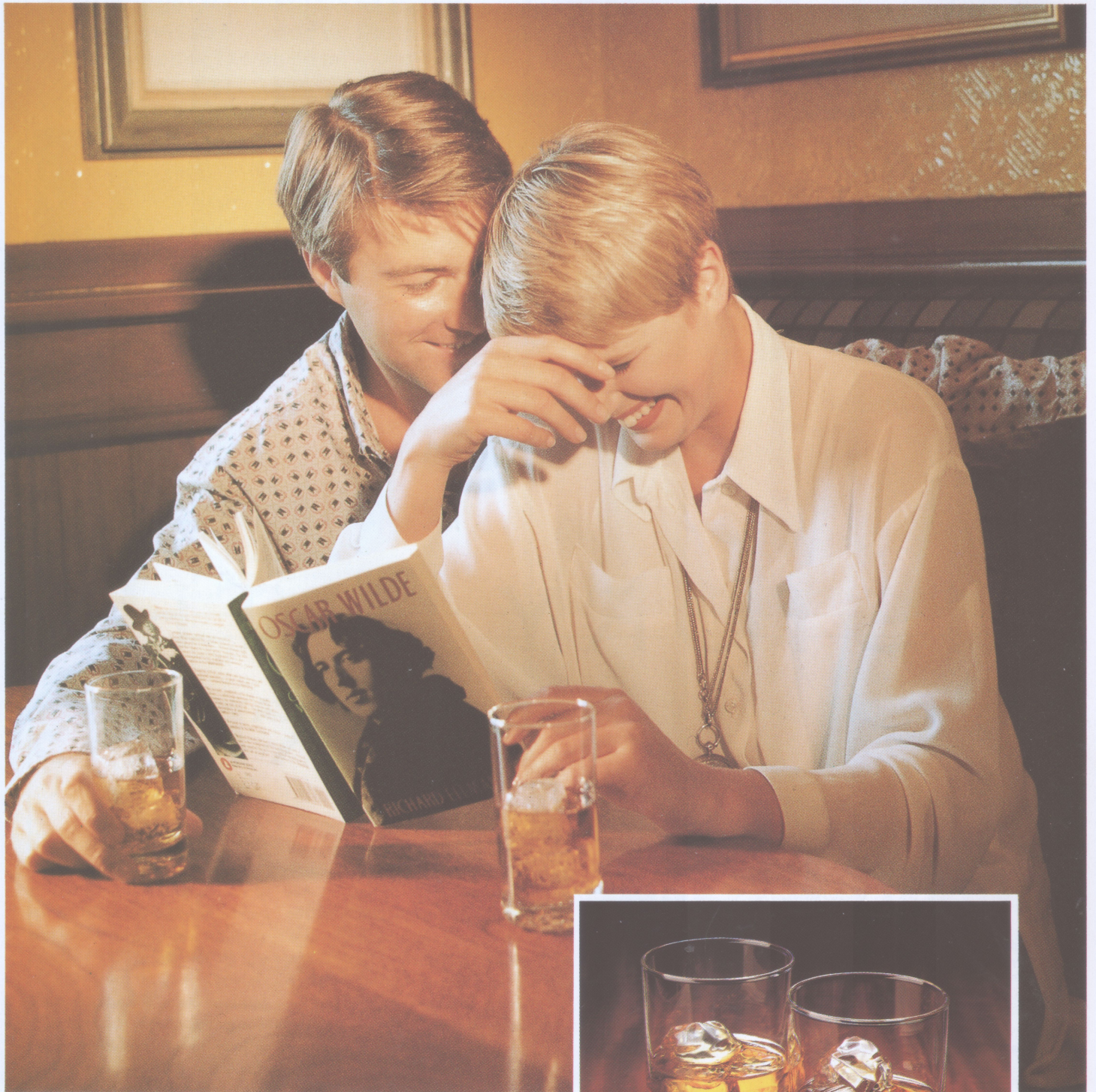
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LAUGH AFTER ALL THIS TIME... SOMETHING
SPECIAL ABOUT HIM THAT NEVER FADES...
A SHARED PLEASURE YOU CAN RETURN TO
AGAIN AND AGAIN... LIKE IRISH MIST.



*Hugh Oram traces
the history of the
Great Southern
Hotel group — the
oldest hotel group
in Ireland — from
its inception in
1845 to the present
day.*



HISTORY IN THE MAKING

LAKE OF KILLARNEY
RAILWAY HOTEL,
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This magnificent Establishment, admitted to be one of the finest in Europe, possesses everything requisite to promote the comfort and convenience of the Nobility and Tourists.

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FROM 1st NOVEMBER TO 1st JUNE.

CONTINENTAL LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY THE MANAGER.
ALL ATTENDANCE CHARGED.

Refer to pages 69 & 70 of this Work for description of the Hotel.

Once owned by a railway company, and now owned by Aer Rianta, the airports authority, the hotels in the Great Southern chain present an enticing combination of old and new. Out of the seven hotels in the group, three are stately mansions, creations of the great era of 19th century railway hotels, and four are modern.

At the Corrib Great Southern in Galway, the finishing touches are being put to a £6 million expansion that will bring the bedroom total to 180 and make it the largest hotel and conference centre outside Dublin. The Shannon Great Southern, opposite the main terminal of the airport, is in the process of being reopened after extensive refurbishment. The Rosslare Great Southern and the Torc in Killarney are the other modern hotels in the group.

The Great Southern group says of itself that it has been setting standards since 1845, for that was when the earliest hotel in the present group opened, at Eyre Square, Galway. It was built by the Midland and Western Railway Company, between the new railway station and the square. Passengers arriving from Dublin just stepped out of the steam train into the hotel. The opening of the Galway hotel coincided with the start of a packet service from the city to St. John's in Newfoundland by the Atlantic Royal Mail Navigation Company.

In 1918, the great, blocky grey stone building facing onto Eyre Square, the hub of Galway, was requisitioned by the British Army, who used it as a barracks. Once the treaty was signed between the new Irish Free State and Britain at

the end of 1921, the hotel was taken over by the new Irish Army and in 1925, it reverted to railway company ownership. Today, the majestic proportions of the hotel's 120 bedrooms give a clue to its expansive railway origins, as does the Railway Bar.

Managed by a German, Louis Schill, who had been running an hotel in London, it was inaugurated with a dinner for the directors and a few of their friends. The description of that dinner has set the standard for the hotel over the years: "the entertainment was so well cooked and served as to augur most favourably the future success of the establishment in the culinary department, and the wines, champagne, burgundy, claret, port and sherry, were of the best vintages."

Two innovative features drew public attention. The hotel had its own gasometer, which provided gas for lighting the hotel. It also had a large airing room; English writers who visited the hotel soon after it opened, Mr and Mrs Hall, noted that to prevent the danger of damp sheets or beds, every piece of linen was kept in this heated chamber until required.

Just 11 years after the hotel opened, it launched another innovation: the Killarney Navy, 24 strong, under a commodore called Jeremiah Clifford. The job of the crew, all clad in sailor-like uniforms of blue and white, was to take tourists on trips around the famed lakes of Killarney.

Today's Great Southern Hotel in Killarney retains every inch of its founding elegance. Guests still make their entry to the hotel up an imposing flight of stone steps, lined with brass railings, to be greeted in the vast entrance hall by the always burning fire in the great fireplace. For an hotel in the middle of a bustling tourist town, the bedrooms are very quiet; another surprise is the 30 acres of gardens.

Over the years, the hotel has had its notorious and its famous characters. During World War I, a German spy called Lodi was arrested in the hotel and carted off to the Tower of London, where he was executed. When Billy Wilder

directed the film "The Lindbergh Story" in the late 1940s, starring James Stewart, the hotel was their headquarters. In the late 1960s, when Sir David Lean, who died recently, was making "Ryan's Daughter" with Robert Mitchum, Trevor Howard, Sarah Miles and Sir John Mills, they were familiar figures in the immediate region.

Other film stars to have stayed at the Killarney Great Southern over the years included Charlie Chaplin, Bing Crosby, Susan Hayward, Bob Hope and Tyrone Power.

The Great Southern Hotel at Parknasilla is a mansion of Gothic extravagance, set amid the sub-tropical scenic splendours of south Kerry, looking out on the blue waters of the Kenmare River estuary. The hotel stands on 300 acres of almost tropical parkland, whose origins go back to an Anglo-Irish family called Bland, whose first member to come to Ireland was the Rev James Bland, who arrived in 1692 as chaplain to Lord Deputy Sidney. The Bland family created the Derryquin estate, now known as Parknasilla, which is usually translated from the Irish as "field of the willows".

Parknasilla is the hotel; there is no village or town of that name.

In 1891, the house and most of the estate were bought by the Southern Hotel Company, which added extra bedrooms and opened the Southern Hotel in May, 1895. At the turn of the century, the new hotel was opened, near the Bishop's House, designed by James Franklin Fuller, a descendant of the Bland family who once owned the estate.

Within a short time of the Parknasilla hotel opening, the tourist guide books were ecstatic about the new hotel and its luxurious setting. Tourists had to be brought from Kenmare railway station, which opened in 1893 and closed in 1959, by horse carriage.

From the hotel, guests went out on tours of the South Kerry region, along roads lined with red fuchsias and orange day lilies. A 1902 guide book reported that it cost 16 shillings to hire a one horse car from Parknasilla to Waterville, 50 per cent more for



the return journey.

Just as the Southern Hotel company was opening the new Parknasilla hotel at the turn of the century, the firm was being taken over by the Great Southern and Western Railway, hence the "Great Southern" name in the present seven hotels in the group.

In 1925, the GS & W was amalgamated with all the other railways in the Irish Free State to form Great Southern Railways. Exactly 20 years later, in 1945, the GSR became part of Córas Iompair Éireann, CIE, which was nationalised in 1950. For many years subsequently, the Great Southern Hotels continued under CIE ownership.

Once, Great Southern Hotels also owned, in addition to the Kenmare hotel, now the Park, the Great Northern Hotel in Bundoran (another hotel with a railway history), an hotel at Mulraney in Co Mayo and a modern hotel in Belfast.

Now, under Aer Rianta ownership, an exciting new era has opened up for the seven Great Southern Hotels, but the three oldest hotels, Eyre Square in Galway, the Killarney Great Southern and Parknasilla, will always retain that indelible connection with the great age of steam trains. These days, the difference is that tourists arrive by air and the horse carriage has been replaced by the car.

Above:
Parknasilla:
'a mansion of Gothic architectural extravagance'.

Opposite page:
The Great Southern Hotel and Padraic O'Conaire – the two most famous residents of Eyre Square in Galway.

*Michael D. Higgins, poet and
mayor of Galway reflects on
Co. Galway, one of the most*



*beautiful counties in Ireland which has seen many changes over the years but which
has retained its character intact. Co. Galway is renowned for the artistic and
generous nature of its inhabitants.*

GALWAY: A STATE OF MIND

**Co. Galway is a county
shrouded in a mystique
which has inspired
many artists and
writers.**

Galway is a state of mind. When I came to the city 30 years ago everybody spoke of it as a town. Over the decades it has stretched itself and become a city with an extraordinary captivating quality. There are many who flirt with this state of mind that is Galway. In Dublin, when Galway is mentioned it indicates a rupture of the ordinary. People search for the past in Galway, have fantasies about an artistic present, drop out in Quay St, drop in to a series of festivals of which the centrepiece is the Arts Festival in July.

There are those who come and

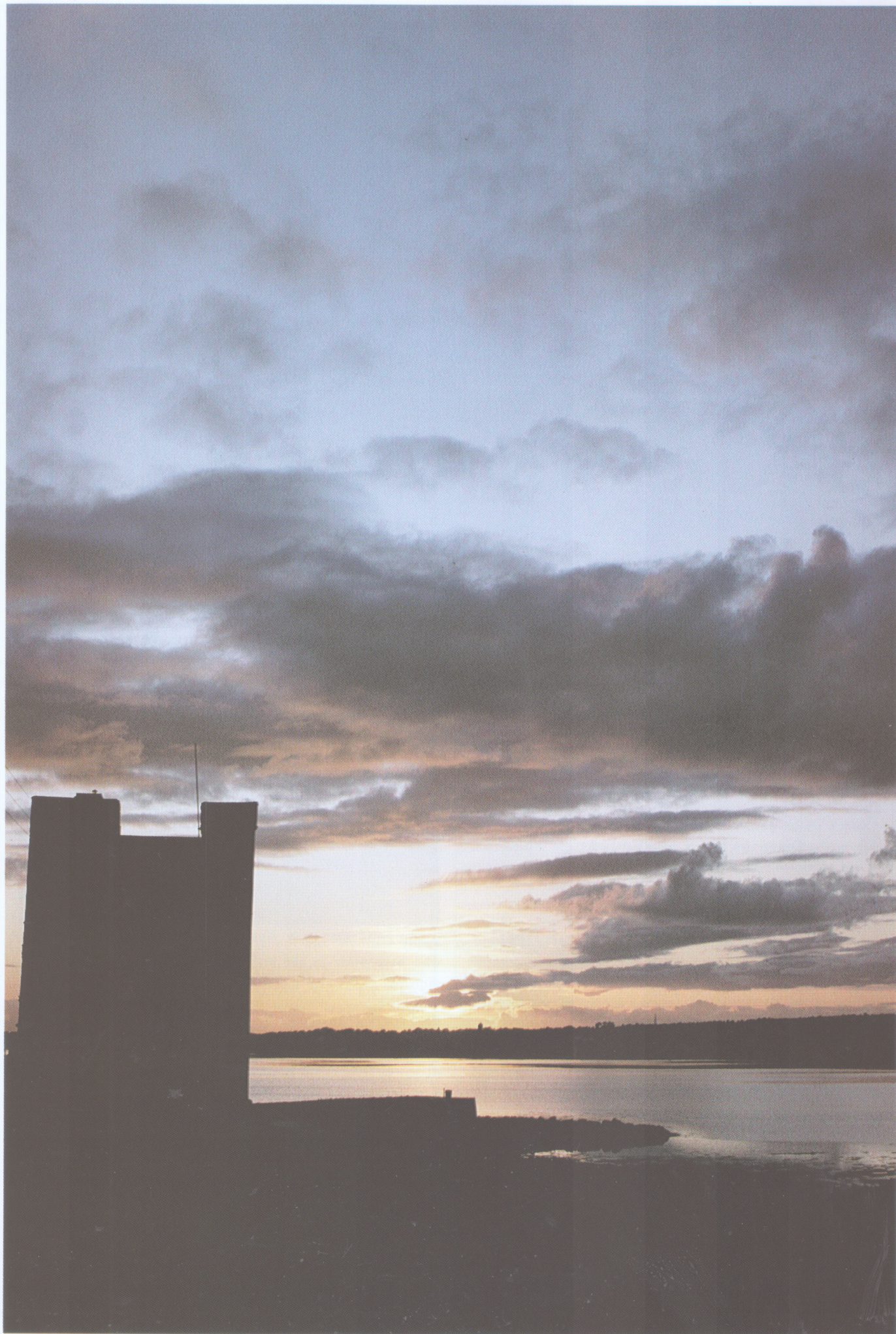
never leave. Galway today is the fastest growing city in Europe. The last few years have seen its retail structure change utterly under the arrival of hundreds of new speciality shops, craft workshops, financial services, restaurants and hostels.

Looking back, I am in agreement with an image of Benedict Kiely. "Galway is about water," I seem to remember him saying. He is right. The unchanging feature of the city is water — water in the Corrib which flows into the sea from the magnificent Lough Corrib, water that flows through

the canals and recalls the days of milling and distilleries, water in the Bay where now a sailing tradition, that is ancient, has been strengthened with the assistance of people such as Enda O'Coinneen who single handedly steered his craft across the Atlantic.

Behind the lines of water stands the Connemara Ridge — ancient and beautiful. To its south is located the largest surviving Gaeltacht that has produced such writers as Máirtín Ó'Cadhain, in his contribution to literature in Irish, of the stature of Joyce.

In the bay sit the Aran Islands,





now easily accessible by sea or air. Even on a trip for a day, this place of stone charted in detail by Tim Robinson casts a spell. From Aran came the writers Liam O'Flaherty and his nephew Breandán Ó'hEithir, the superb poet Máirtín Ó Direáin and many others.

The adventurous will travel out to Clifden which nestles in the middle of the Connemara mountains and which has been a chosen retreat of painters such as Maurice MacGonigal and actors including Peter O'Toole.

It is not the physical setting, however, that makes the Galway experience. It is not the obvious antiquity of its Norman stone buildings.

It is the spirit of its inhabitants. This spirit is generous and modern. The modern Galway is a delicate creation — the work of artists and those who promote them, such as Ollie Jennings, more than any other group.

True the Corporation has managed to ensure the planned environment is sensitive and its urban renewal programme has brought it acclaim and awards. It is also true that institutions such as its two Third Level educational centres have excelled.

It is the conversation, the wit,

the democracy of philosophers encountered in cafés and pubs that enthrals.

In establishments such as O'Mailles you can speak Irish, English or French as you look at tweeds bought by the modern oriented representative of generations of tweed specialists. You can browse through Kenny's Book-shop, as known abroad as it is in Galway or look at a breathtaking range of contemporary paintings. There is the restored mill, Sheelah na Gigs bookshop where a conversation about the name will not be dull — I could go on, I should go on. Space precludes my tendency.

For many, however, one of the first figures they will encounter standing outside the Great Southern Hotel is that of Denis or one of his colleagues.

His great cape and hat covers a heart that I have found to be full of generous information, warmth and competence.

In an age of asset manipulation the Great Southern Hotels group's greatest asset is not the magnificent reputation they have worked to create and deservedly won.


It is Denis and his colleagues who are the Group's greatest asset. Over the years visitors to Galway have been assisted by Denis,



Paddy Gannon, and thousands who have pride in the professionalism of their work and who have made Great Southern Hotels the flagship of Ireland's hotel industry, training so many of those who go on to work elsewhere, at home and abroad.

It was upstairs in the Claddagh Rooms, that artist Mick Mulcahy and I worked together as he prepared the artwork for my collection of poems *The Betrayal* ...

Sitting on a chair I read them out as Mick worked. On breaks the coffee kept coming ... we looked out at the lights of Galway. The night was still. It was all happening in Galway...

Galway — yes. A state of mind. 

A feature of the Connemara landscape is the traditional stone cottages with thatched roofs — a permanent reminder of a bygone age.

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Illustrated: O'Hara Stemware



GALWAY
IRISH CRYSTAL

NEW BUSINESS CENTRE IN GALWAY

The Galway Great Southern's new Business Centre is already a great success just a few short weeks after its inception. The Business Centre provides an office for executives who, away from base, want to make the best use of their time. The latest in telecommunication facilities — fax, telex, modem, fixed and cellular phones — enable our executive guests to keep in touch while an IBM computer and printer provide easy-to-use spreadsheet and word processing software packages. There's a laminating and report binding service as well as a shredding machine.

The Centre is managed by experienced personnel who offer a fully confidential secretarial service so the busy executive can relax over a coffee, reading the latest business magazines, while his or her productivity rate soars!

There are plans to extend Business Centres to other Great Southern Hotels.

GO FOR GOLD!

Have you wondered why some Great Southern people wear distinctive pins? Well, these GSH pins, in the shape of the Company's dove symbol, are awarded to mark the long service which is a much valued feature of the Company's tradition. The bronze pin is given to those staff members who have completed 5 years service while the silver and gold are awarded to those with ten and fifteen years respectively. Many staff have in fact much longer than 15 years as they'll be proud to tell you.

BUSINESSWOMEN ON THE MOVE

In what has become a fast moving business world, Great Southern Hotels have recognised that a growing section of their market consists of women travelling alone and on business. In response to this trend, the Group have provided a selection of carefully designed facilities and services to accommodate the special needs of today's business woman.

The fruits of this policy are already being witnessed in the Galway

Southern Hotel in Eyre Square where the renowned luxury and comfort of the rooms is being complemented by the Lady Executive rooms which have been decorated with additional mirrors, lights and clothes presses with irons. In a further attention to detail and comfort, door spyholes and additional locks have been installed in each room to ensure maximum security and privacy. A comprehensive selection of business and special interest reading material has also been provided. These special services will be extended across the Great Southern chain by the end of the year.

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Mary O'Leary of the Great Southern Hotel in Rosslare is the GSH Employee of the Year. Mary's popular victory was announced at a Gala Banquet, attended by over 120 staff from all GSH hotels, held in the Great Southern Hotel in Galway. The Employee of the Year Award is an initiative of the Staff Participation Councils which operate in each hotel. The Councils provide a regular forum for the exchange of views between local management and staff and an employee of the year is selected in each location from the winners of monthly contests.

Mary O'Leary's prize? £500, a Clarinbridge Crystal Bowl, and the holiday of her choice for two anywhere in Europe.



The Gala Banquet came at the end of a day of great fun games, and some sports competitions too.

SERVICE WITH A SMILE

As Commissionaire of the Galway Great Southern, Denis O'Brien is aware of his position in the front line



Denis O'Brien, the popular Commissionaire at the Galway Great Southern in Eyre Square.

when the guests first arrive and he recognises the importance of creating a favourable first impression:

"I greet the guests and welcome them as they arrive", Denis explains, "and then introduce them to the reception staff by name. In general, I ensure that they check in speedily and with the minimum of fuss and see to it that the necessary car parking and valeting facilities are made available to the guests".

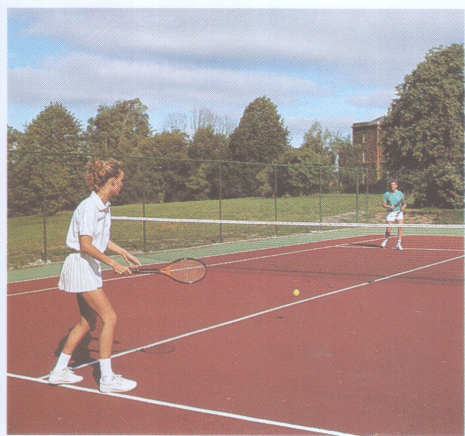
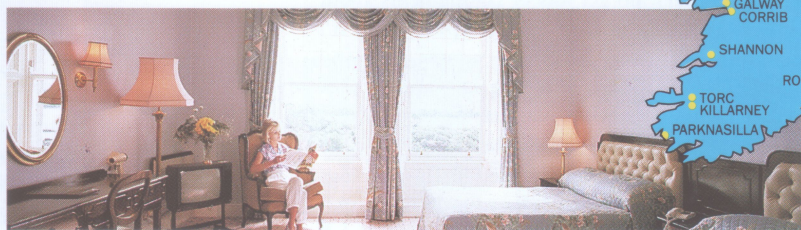
For Denis, the rapport which exists between the staff at the Great Southern in Galway, makes his task a lot easier, ensuring the maximum quality of service for the guests: "As the saying goes", Denis adds, "Great Southern, Great Experience". This is a home away from home for many of the staff and we are like one big happy family. For the most part, the staff are young, vibrant and friendly but there are some very experienced staff members and the blend of youth and experience is a factor of our success".

Mary O'Leary, Great Southern Hotel Employee of the Year.



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- Golf • Over 55's • Gardening • Flying Breaks
- Record Breakers Weekend
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Enquire at Reception for full details of our Leisure Breaks.

For onward bookings to any Great Southern Hotel, please contact Reception or Central Reservations at (01) 2808031.

Killarney Great Southern

Built in 1854, this gracious, mellow hotel is beside the town centre, surrounded by 36 acres of tranquil gardens. Its new indoor leisure centre includes a heated swimming pool, sauna, jacuzzi, gymnasium, steamroom and plunge pool.

Torc Great Southern, Killarney

If you prefer a luxurious modern hotel as your Killarney base, choose the Torc; set in beautiful gardens with a superb standard of cuisine and service and excellent leisure facilities.

Galway Great Southern

A great, traditional hotel in the grand style; right in the heart of Galway City. You'll enjoy the gourmet delights of our marvellous restaurant, and our rooftop indoor pool.

Corrib Great Southern, Galway

The stylish, modern Corrib looks out over Galway Bay, and is an excellent base for a touring holiday. It has a super new leisure centre and children are especially welcome.

Parknasilla Great Southern

A superb, luxury hotel in 300 acres of magnificent gardens touched into tropical splendour by the balmy Gulf Stream. Private golf course and award-winning restaurant among its many attractions.

Rosslare Great Southern

The perfect hotel to enjoy a wonderful family holiday in the sunny South-East. This is a luxurious, relaxing hotel, which prides itself on its wonderful food, atmosphere and leisure facilities.

Shannon Great Southern

This extensively renovated hotel offers the ideal opportunity to recover from or prepare for long international flights, and makes an excellent touring base for the Shannon Region.

Great Southern Hotels

Parknasilla, Co. Kerry: Tel: 064-45122. Eyre Square, Galway Tel: 091-64041. Killarney, Co. Kerry: Tel: 064-31262.
Corrib, Galway, Tel: 091-55281. Torc, Killarney, Co. Kerry: Tel: 064-31611.
Rosslare, Co. Wexford Tel: 053-33233. Shannon, Co. Clare: Tel: 061-61122.

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*Ireland's only lady chef to head the kitchen
brigade in a Grade A* hotel, Josephine Lean,
has been instrumental in maintaining
Parknasilla's reputation for*

JOSEPHINE MAKES HER MARK!

*culinary
excellence.*

*Here, she
describes her
approach and
shares some of
her culinary
secrets.*

Josephine Lean with
some of her celebrated
creations.

Parknasilla has become duly renowned for being the flagship of the Great Southern Hotel chain. Situated in the picturesque surroundings of some 300 acres overlooking Kenmare Bay, the hotel offers its guests the best in sporting facilities including golf on the private golf course, horse riding, tennis and snooker. Leisure facilities include an indoor swimming pool, sauna, steam room and jacuzzi.

It is on the culinary front however, that Parknasilla has been making its mark. Josephine Lean, Ireland's only Grade A* hotel lady chef, has not only maintained the award-winning reputation of Parknasilla's cuisine but she has also brought her own distinct style and flair. 'Ours is a modern Irish cuisine' says Josephine, 'which has proved very popular with our guests who come from many different countries'. Josephine plans her menus around the best of what's fresh and available locally. Not surprisingly, fish from the rivers and sea which surround the estate feature predominantly. There is a French influence in Josephine's work: 'There is an element of nouvelle cuisine but we have adapted that style to broaden its appeal and to ensure that we are always complementing the superb quality of Irish produce.'

Little wonder that the Pygmalion restaurant should be so highly regarded both by the public and by the hotel and catering industry in Ireland. 'We do get lots of compliments about the food' says Josephine 'and it's very gratifying to see so many guests returning time after time. I think a big part of our success here is because we are able to combine our elegant surroundings and superb location with relaxed, friendly (and highly professional) staff. Jackie O'Sullivan the head waiter; Sonny Looney, who is in charge of the bar; and Tom Doyle, the head porter have all been with the company at Parknasilla for many years. Many of our guests say that they're part of what makes Parknasilla special.'

And Josephine too has made her own special contribution to making Parknasilla unique. Her biggest challenge ever came during Ireland's Presidency of the European Commission. Gerard Collins TD, Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs, invited his counterparts to Parknasilla for a working weekend. With helicopters arriving on the golf course and the Irish army patrolling the grounds, Josephine and her team worked in the background to provide memorable meals for the distinguished guests. They succeeded

and the sophisticated European palates were more than satisfied by a series of menus which incorporated the best of Irish produce and the best of Irish cooking.

TRELLIS OF SALMON AND SOLE FILLETS SERVED WITH A PRAWN SAUCE.

Place four strips of salmon and four strips of sole interwoven on a tray. Poach for 5-7 minutes. Place on a bed of prawn sauce and serve on an oval plate.

**PRAWN SAUCE —
4 PORTIONS**

**1pt fish stock
1/4pt white wine
1/2pt cream
3oz butter
12 prawns**

To make the fish stock: Sweat off 3 shallots (sliced) in a little butter. Add 2lbs fish bones and sweat off for about 10 minutes. Add 3 pints water, bay leaf and parsley stalks. Cook for 20 min. Strain. Put the liquid back on the heat to reduce by half.

Having made the fish stock, add the wine and then reduce it by half. Pour in the cream before adding the jumbo prawns. Finish with a dash of whiskey and a knob of hard butter.



PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE BUNN



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- The general landscaping and architectural design matches the outstanding elements of the location itself.
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historical and archaeological sites including Skellig Michael, Ballinskelligs Abbey "the first University of the world" and the pre-famine village of Kildreelig.

• Set in the Gaeltacht area of Ireland, visitors find a unique sense of old Irish warmth and friendliness.

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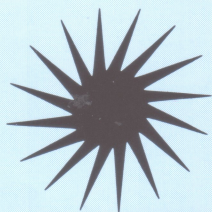
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*The Great Southern Hotel in Killarney
has become the pre-eminent
conference centre in the country.*

*Jim Nolan, Director, I.A.P.I.,
talks about their successful
annual conference recently
held in Killarney.*



DOING THE BUSINESS

In addition to being one of the most popular, unique and generally superb hotels in Ireland, the Great Southern in Killarney has established itself as one of the best equipped and pre-eminent conference centres in the country.

Recently, for example, the Institute of Advertising Practitioners in Ireland held their annual conference at the Great Southern. Speaking with Jim Nolan, Director, I.A.P.I. on their return, gave some indication as to why the Great Southern has become so synonymous with conferencing in Ireland.

"What particularly attracted us to the Great Southern this year", Jim explains, "was the fact that the conference facilities had been extended recently and we found them to be excellent. The nature of the business that we are in is such, that our delegates and speakers use a lot of audio-visual and media equipment. This proved no problem for the hotel and we felt from the start that we were in good hands."

The I.A.P.I. conference this year boasted some 170 delegates including some from the North and some from the U.K. It was the sixteenth such conference to be organised, providing an opportunity for the delegates involved

in selling media to meet up with those involved in buying it. The service from the hotel to the delegates began before many of them even arrived. Almost 100 delegates chose to travel to the conference by train. In order to save time and ease the registration process, the delegates were issued with their registration forms on the train, thus saving a lot of hassle on arrival. It was a small touch, but typical of the attention to detail and experience in such matters that the staff at the Great Southern Hotels possess.

"The conference room was done out in schoolroom style", Jim explains, "and that worked very well. We used hand mikes when people wanted to make contributions and there was plenty of room so that worked out smoothly."

Since the I.A.P.I. last held their annual conference in Killarney, there have been many changes at the Great Southern. Over the last four years, the hotel has been restored to its original splendour in line with the multi-million pound investment in the Great Southern group as a whole. This is particularly obvious in Killarney when looking at the new leisure centre. All work and no play makes Jack or Jill a dull delegate but there was no fear of that at the Great

Southern: "The staff at the hotel were very helpful in all manner of things", says Jim, "on the recreational front, this included arranging tours etc. And of course Killarney is the ultimate base for sightseeing. A number of the delegates availed of the golfing facilities but it was the leisure centre which was the most popular with delegates."

The new leisure centre at the Great Southern in Killarney is indeed one of the most spectacular and comprehensive leisure facilities in Ireland and all of the new amenities have been carefully designed to blend in perfectly with the existing elegance.

"The feedback has been very positive", says Jim Nolan, "a lot of the delegates have sent us nice notes saying how pleased they were with both the conference and the venue. The extra work which has been done on the conference centre has been a tremendous step forward. From the point of view of our organisation committee, all our colleagues would agree: it is very easy to hold a conference in the Great Southern Hotel in Killarney! There is also a Business Centre at the Great Southern Hotel Shannon, and there are plans to extend business centres to other locations."

A typical Great Southern Hotel conference room, affording plenty of space for delegates and speakers as well as audio visual equipment.

Verney Naylor, who has a wonderful garden at home, takes a trip around the beautiful and

FLOWERS FOR ALL SEASONS!

*unusual gardens open to the public near the
different Great Southern Hotels.*

Summer in Ireland can be glorious — not too hot nor too cold — a blue haze of mountains in the distance, a flash of white as the waves break onto the rocks at the sea's edge, or the gentle stillness of lakes and green fields. What if it occasionally rains or the mist temporarily obscures the view? Any gardener will tell you that we need the moisture just as much as the sunshine to make our plants grow and here, virtually on our doorstep, we have a beautiful selection of gardens brimming over with the luxuriant growth of exotic plants and many of these gardens are open to the public.

The dramatic scenery of sea and mountain forms the everchanging backdrop to gardens in the Southwest where the acid soil and warm waters of the Gulf Stream allow a wide variety of tender trees and shrubs to be grown. On the opposite shore of the Kenmare River from Parknasilla are Derreen Gardens (064 83103) where the New Zealand tree ferns are so at home that they are seeding themselves about and as in other gardens of the region, the Chilean myrtle has become naturalised, so prolific are its seedlings. The spicy scent of its billowing masses

of tiny white flowers in late summer adds a tropical feel to this lovely garden where shady walks take you past huge rocks, through groves of bamboo and between banks of rhododendrons.

Taking the spectacular road from Kenmare over the Caha mountains, you drop down to the lush woods of Glengarriff and there, set like a jewel in the sparkling waters of Bantry Bay, lies Garinish Island and the garden of Illnacullin (027 63040). Here many different moods — formal Italian gardens with temples and statues, wide open lawns, long wooded walks and old fashioned double-sided herbaceous borders — all join together to make one of Ireland's most famous gardens.

A few miles further round the Bay, the recently restored gardens of Bantry House (027 50047) add an extra bonus to a tour of the interior of the house. The view across the wide lawn, past huge urns, of Bantry Bay is only surpassed by the one from the very top of the flight of stone steps that rise up by a series of terraces behind the house. Around the house are the more formal areas of this fine example of an Italian style garden.

A visit to the Killarney area

from Parknasilla will surely include the gardens at Muckross (064 31947) where the massed planting of rhododendrons make a colourful foreground to the surrounding mountains. Streams, dwarf conifers and a recently developed arboretum provide variety.

The stark scenery of the West of Ireland has a wild beauty all of its own. The winter gales that buffet this rocky edge of Europe have made it difficult to establish large ornamental gardens, but just south of Galway city in Co. Clare, the Burren forms one of nature's most magnificent rock gardens. The limestone rock formed two hundred million years ago, lies as bare pavements, stripped of almost all its soil. In all the cracks and crevices, wherever there is a small bit of shelter, grows a wonderful collection of wild flowers. Gentians, mountain avens, bloody cranesbills, maidenhair ferns and many more — flowers that elsewhere grow at the tops of mountains or in the arctic, are seen here thriving at the edge of the Atlantic.

Inland from Galway the formal gardens at Portumna Castle (0509 41287) have recently been restored to a

geometric layout complete with box hedges and other plants that would have been grown in the seventeenth century. An ancient mulberry tree adds to the antiquity.

Not far from Portumna and easily within driving distance from Galway, the Demesne of Birr Castle (0509 20056) is an important historical garden and contains a world renowned plant collection that has been built up by several generations. The present Earl of Rosse, like his father before him, supports plant hunting expeditions to bring back seeds from far and wide.





Birr Castle towers above wild flower meadows stretching away to a distant lake. There are river bank walks under lofty native and exotic trees and behind high walls is hidden an old fashioned formal garden of wisteria arches, box hedges, beds of peonies and a collection of lilacs. Over the past few years an arboretum has been developed to continue the policy of augmenting the wide range of trees to be seen here.

Another important collection of trees, only started in recent years, is at the John F. Kennedy Arboretum (051 88171) just south of New Ross not far from

Rosslare. Here the plants are laid out using scientific principles on a grid system with walks designed to give pleasure in every season as well as to educate.

Johnstown Castle Gardens (053 42888) lie a few miles up the road from Rosslare. Huge specimen trees grow around a lake with long wooded walks amongst rhododendrons and azaleas. A walled garden contains new planting and magnificent traditional glasshouses show off a wonderful display of pot plants.

Probably the smallest garden on our itinerary, but a real gem, is that at Kilmokea (051 88109) at

Detail from "Bank of Flowers", a watercolour by Andrew Nicholl

(1804-1886). Andrew

Nicholl was Ireland's best known painter of flowers and gardens.

The meadows of Ireland inspired Nicholl perhaps even more than the formal gardens of grand demesnes. This watercolour can be seen in the Print Room of the National Gallery in Dublin.

Campile, due west of Rosslare. A country house atmosphere pervades these unique few acres of Co. Wexford, where peacocks strut across the lawns, an Italian garden with pillared loggia is reflected in the formal pool, and topiary and herbaceous borders surround the Georgian house. Whilst across the lane, an informal water garden is full of birdsong, rare trees and Himalayan primulas.

So, hoping for sunny days but being prepared for rain, take your umbrella and strong shoes and go and admire our beautiful and luxuriant gardens.



Celebrated photographer and author Mike Bunn extolls the virtues of the fishing in lakes and seas around Ireland while focusing in particular on what Kerry has to offer the angler.



The pleasures of fishing in Ireland have attracted anglers from all over the world to her shores. Whether it be salt or freshwater, there really is nowhere quite like Ireland.

My first fishing trip to Ireland was, luckily enough, quite straightforward. I knew absolutely nothing about the place, and had chosen one destination, which definitely had been the right decision. The fishing was fantastic.

As an angler's paradise, whether salt or freshwater, Ireland is certainly without equal anywhere else in Europe, and who knows perhaps the world.

This tiny little island of a country set to sea an eternity and a half ago only to founder and finally settle on the sea bed, at the extremities of Western Europe, her shores constantly awash with the pounding of the North Atlantic, or kissed by the southern comfort of the Gulf Stream.

This convergence of warm and cold waters, known as the North

Atlantic Drift has resulted in Ireland being surrounded by the mysteries of the deep in a most unusual harmony.

Here hundreds of different species of fish and marine life from warm and cold habitats manage to co-exist happily together in these unpolluted seas. From the warm coasts of Cork, Kerry and Clare, where young blue and porbeagle sharks can be found along with bass enjoying these Northern Climes, to the shellfish of Galway, on to the incredible varieties of fish from Clew Bay to Killala Bay in Co. Mayo and on up to the massive crab, whitefish and herring grounds off the coast of Donegal.

Stored up in the North Atlantic Drift is solar energy that has been carried along all the way by the

Gulf Stream from the Saragasso Sea dragging with it those often laden skies that constantly wash the face of Ireland.

The resulting wild weather and plentiful rainfall makes Ireland a fairly wet place with vast loughs, rivers and waterways rushing to the sea, over both a rich and dramatic landscape. Having been spared intensive farming and 20th century heavy industry, has left them like her coastal waters, unpolluted and full of fish, coarse and game.

That huge sluggish river and waterway, the Shannon, that almost divides the country in two, hosts three of Ireland's largest loughs, Allen, Ree and Derg, all superb trout and pike lakes. The river itself and the inner lakes are home to enormous shoals of

FISHING IN DEEP WATERS





Offshore boat angling in Kerry is very good. There is a boat available at Parknasilla for deep sea fishing. Guests have a short walk through the beautiful gardens to board the boat at the jetty, before setting off for a day's exciting fishing.



bream, rudd and perch, with trout throughout the system and salmon in those lower reaches.

The Shannon must be one of the richest mixed fresh water fisheries in the world.

Counties Cavan, Leitrim and Monaghan abound in lakes and rivers full of coarse fish of specimen size. The river Suck and the river Barrow running through counties Galway and Carlow, are also very rich and prolific, mixed fisheries.

The loughs and rivers of counties Donegal, Sligo, Mayo, Galway and Kerry, are famous for salmon, sea trout and brown trout whose quality and size are second to none.

So now with all this fishing where does one go?

It really depends on the type of angling you want to do, and to a lesser extent the sort of location you want to be in.

Advance research and reading along with local knowledge is a must, but wherever you go, I don't think you will be let down.

For the purpose of this article, I will mention a little about the angling available in Kerry. If you are a sea fisherman, then the bass fishing off one of those famous surf beaches, Inch or Strabally on the Dingle Peninsula, has to be a must. There is something very special about being waist-high in water with the surf crashing all around you, the wind and the salty air spray tightening and weathering the skin on your face.

Fishing off rock faces in Kerry



is also very good, but a little warning: this type of fishing is very much a specialist's sport and can be quite dangerous. It should only be attempted by fishermen who know what they are doing, and understand tides, (the latter, especially, are going to determine the results of your day's fishing). Also one should never go out alone. The rewards are there with good catches of pollock, wrasse, and ling.

Boat fishing can be done by the day-tripper as well as the confident angler. Most boats, when available, will have an experienced crew. Tackle and bait can usually be hired and purchased. Here local knowledge about boat fishing is the best way to approach it. There is a very good boat available at Parknasilla. Offshore boat angling in Kerry is very good. This is for the big boys; blue and porbeagle sharks as well as skate. There is good salmon fishing to be had all over Kerry when conditions are right. But it is a big

county so once again it is local knowledge that will determine your chances.

The salmon and sea trout fishing of Lough Currane in Waterville, is absolutely tremendous. Apart from needing a state game fishing licence, the fishing is free. Here the sea trout are famous for their size and eagerness to rise. Already this year the spring salmon fishing has beaten all records.

Boats and boatmen are available in Waterville and around the lake shore.

My favourite new type of fishing which really suits Kerry, is walking up to the small mountain lakes. With very light fly or spinning tackle, one can have great fun with those small lively brown trout.

This can be a family affair as well, and makes for a wonderful and healthy day out. All you need is a good ordnance survey map and the spirit of adventure.

Have fun.





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The South East of Ireland plays host to many tokens of Ireland's ancient heritage. Nicky Furlong looks at the history of the region and visits the Irish National Heritage Park at Ferrycarrig, Co. Wexford.



ON THE HERITAGE TRAIL



Within a ten mile radius of Rosslare there are still, in their original sites, the sign posts of living human beings over a span of 9,000 years. The first race of Ireland's inhabitants hunted here and made their spears, knives and implements here. The region is an outsize museum of old human dreams, of old and new religions, strange customs, pilgrimages and dialects, whose origins are lost in the dense mist of antiquity. The Rosslare and Carnsore Point region, the corner of Ireland, is the closest to Wales, England, and mainland Europe. Peering out of the blanket fog of pre-history is the early inhabitant's perception of his surroundings here and the surrounding sea waters.

This part of the last land on the edge of the known world was be-

lieved possessed by the Devil for thousands of years. Off the Point of Carnsore, the mighty Atlantic slaps against the funnelled Irish Sea. Currents of diverse, unexpected and misunderstood ferocity, as well as storms and hidden reefs, resulted in an annual harvest of sea disasters on a major scale. The idea of a cursed coast gained wide currency. In 190 A.D. the great world map maker, Ptolemy, called Carnsore "Hierom Akron", Greek for Sacred Promontary. His sailor informants told him of rites performed there to placate the demon believed in residence. The mysterious rath of St. Vauk is on that spot. The biggest double ringed rath or earthworks in Western Europe is closeby, the oldest unpublished pilgrimage in Ireland thrives a



little further inland at Our Lady's Island. The whole area reeks of unravelling mystery, of memories which haunt and ghosts whose plaintive cries ring down the thousands of years from brutal waves and history's violence to today's tranquillity.

A few years ago it was decided to solve as much mystery as possible so that today's generation, and especially today's children, could actually see, in an authentic natural environment, the manner in which humans in this region and beyond it lived, hunted, farmed, worshipped and defended themselves. By a happy coincidence, a great site near Wexford town became available for utilisation, or abandonment. It combined not merely the environmental conditions and foliage familiar to early man in Ireland, but it was in fact a place of strategic significance at a vital river ferry crossing and had actually given up to archaeologists the evidence of human occupation over four thousand years ago. With inspired alacrity Wexford's best brains and hands pounced. Today it is the still growing Irish


National Heritage Park at Ferrycarrig, Wexford.

The Heritage Park is a place today of sometimes heart wrenching excitement, simply because of its intimate human dimension and the clear authenticity of the place. You know on experiencing it that this was the way it was. You marvel at the ingenuity of what we like to think of derisively as stone-age man. His adaptation of local materials and hides to make a home, show a long developed cuteness which stimulates glee in the beholder. All these reproductions in the Heritage Park have been erected with meticulous care on the advice of established archaeological specialists, masters in their field. They include complete examples of buildings, earthworks, farmsteads, fortresses, water mills, sites of burial and worship, as they actually were from the time of the earliest Irish inhabitants to the arrival of the Normans eight centuries ago on this very spot.

Having seen the carefully re-erected constructions, here spread over an area of tranquil beauty, the visitor and scholar may, with

far greater insight, view other sites all over Ireland containing the mutilated remnants of the fascinating past. In Wexford's Heritage Park you see them as they were in their prime.

The Heritage Park has other brilliant attractions. They have regular guided tours throughout the Park. The guides are amongst the best informed and wittiest in Ireland with a facility in explaining complicated archaeological data. Since it has become a nationwide attraction for school tours, the ability to explain to the youngest and most fertile of minds has become an art form. It has become so successful that visitors occasionally are alerted to performing guides by yells of laughter.

Don't be in a hurry! A full day could be spent here meandering. The scenery, the spread, the sites, the established nature trails, all need to be teased out like a great meal or tryst of love. And you can indulge both of these too as a bonus. The Park caters for many tastes. Refreshing and satisfying appetites are Heritage Park by-products and determinations. 

The Irish National Heritage Park at Ferrycarrig in Wexford contains complete examples of early Irish buildings, fortresses and farmsteads. The carefully re-erected constructions are fascinating for both the casual visitor and the scholar alike and the Heritage Park has become a nationwide attraction for visitors from all over the world.



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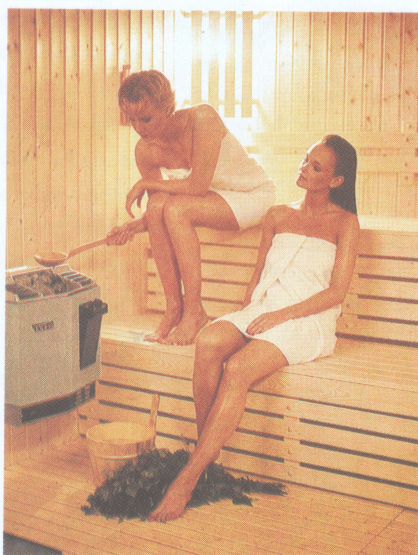
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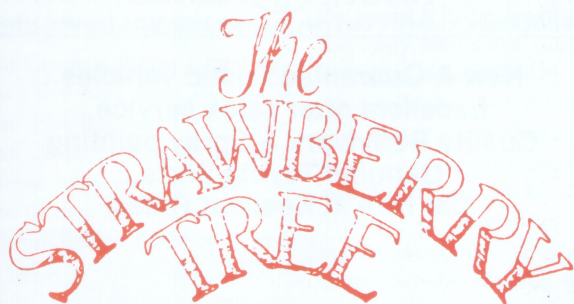
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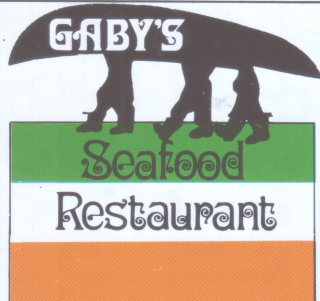
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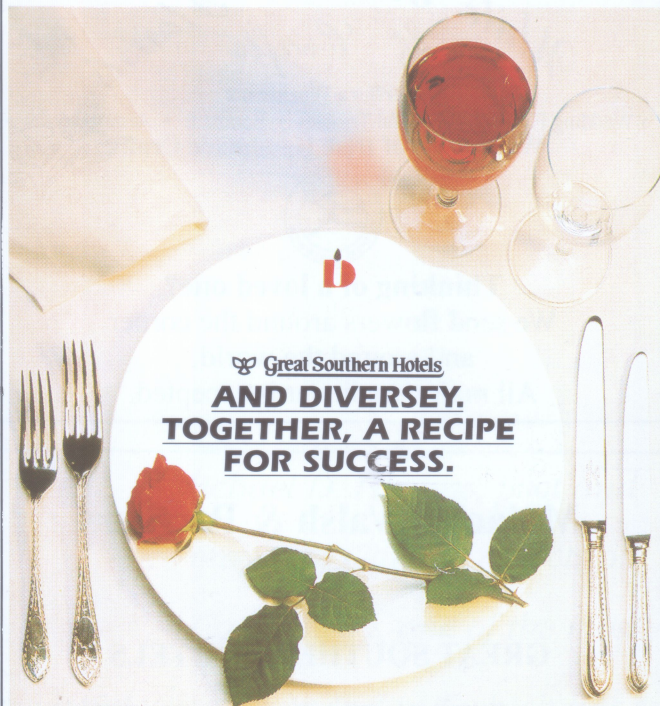


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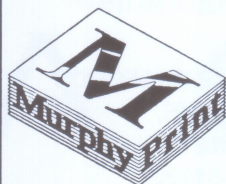


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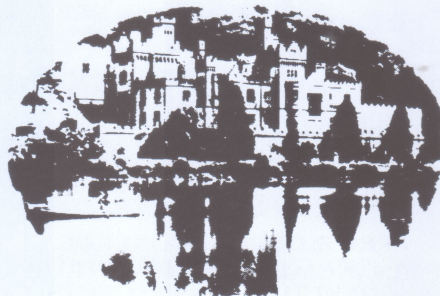
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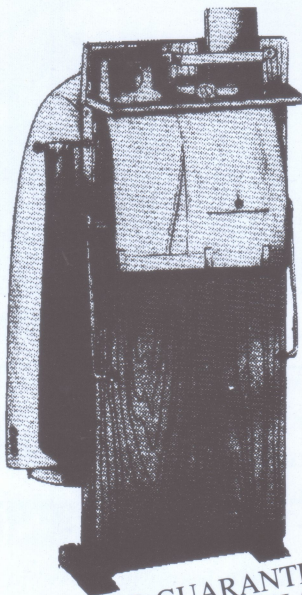
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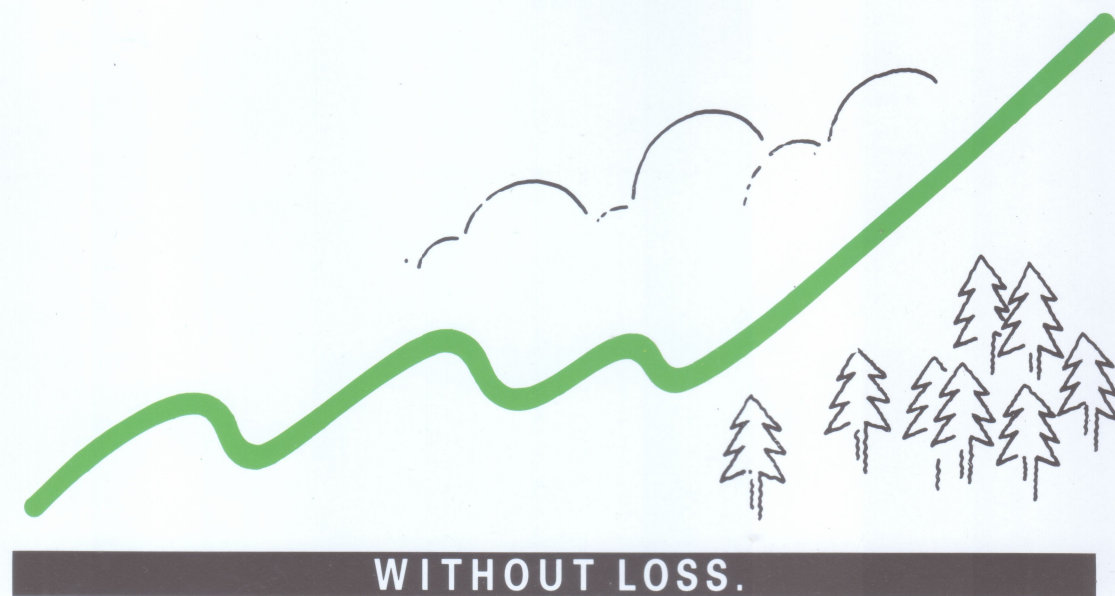
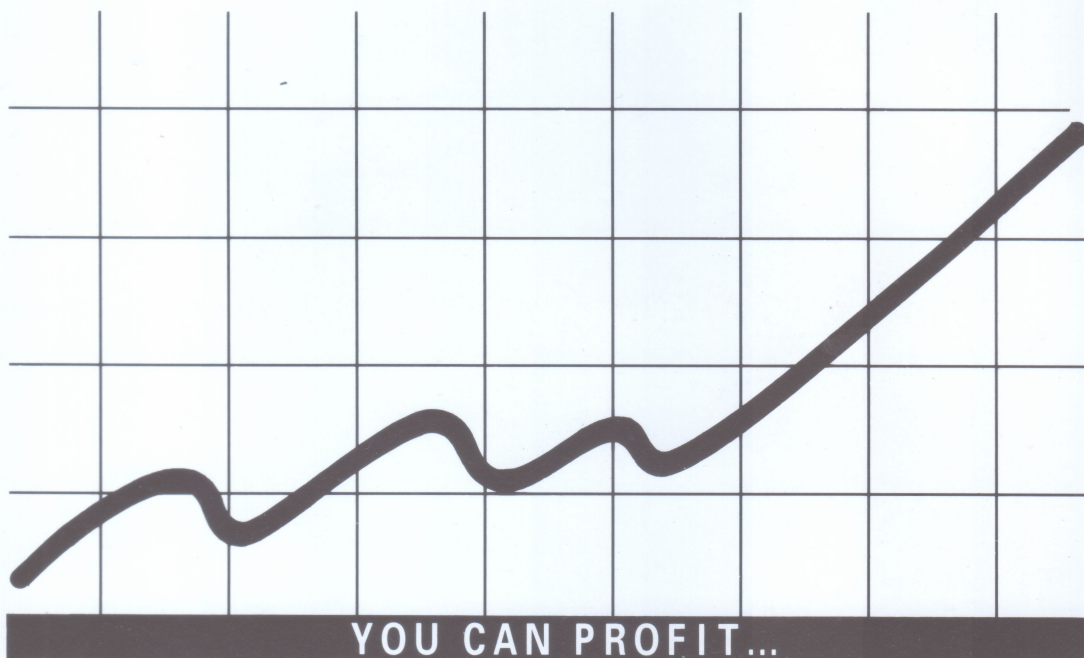
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